

The National Fish Habitat Initiative

Federal Symposium on Coastal Habitat Restoration

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“Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”

- Henry Ford



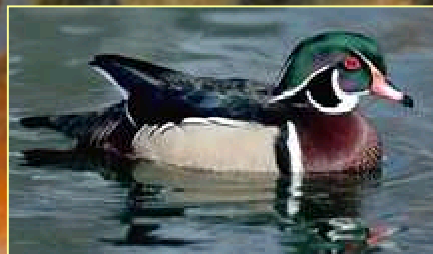
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- “The FWS and its Fisheries Program should serve as a catalyst among states, tribes and other stakeholders to lead development of a National Aquatic Habitat Plan.”

A Partnership Agenda for Fisheries Conservation,

Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, January 2002

- Envisioned as similar to the highly successful North American Waterfowl Management Plan:
 - Partnership-driven at all levels – local, regional, and national
 - Science-based
 - Geographic focus through Joint Ventures



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Actions to Date

- **May 2003 – FWS recognized efforts of SFBPC and committed staff to the scoping effort**
- **September 2003 – IAFWA endorsed concept and pledged to take a lead role**
- **December 2003 – First stakeholders meeting in Kansas City, MO**
- **March 2004 – IAFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee was briefed and discussed working group; second stakeholder meeting in Spokane, WA**
- **April 2004 – Stakeholder meeting in Ocean City, MD**
- **May 2004 – Stakeholder meeting in Nashville, TN**
- **July 2004 – Stakeholder meeting held in Sun Valley, ID.**

Stakeholder Interest is High!

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What's Next?

- August 2004 – Workshop on measuring success to be held at AFS meeting.
- September 2004 - Final report from SFBPC to FWS.
- 2005 – Plan of action developed by FWS, IAFWA, and other partners.

Stakeholder Interest is High!

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AFS Workshop August 2004

- Objectives:
 - Determine quantitative indicators of habitat health at various geographic scales (i.e., local, regional, national).
 - Identify appropriate means to measure habitat condition, including data standards.
- A National Plan will be developed around the criteria identified at the meeting.



Concept Model Structure

Scale

National

Regional

(1 to 100 thousand square miles)

Local

(less than 1,000 square miles)

**Resource
Issues**

**Information
Systems**

**Organizational
Structure**

<p>Fish are depleted, listed, or lost due to habitat conditions.</p> <p>Need to know: How many? Status & trends?</p>	<p>Need linkage and increased use of large-scale systems (NBII-FAR, GAP Analysis, FPDSS, FIS Pops Module)</p>	<p>National Fish Habitat Initiative</p>
<p>Habitat degradation and loss are common issues at regional scale (coastal, Great Lakes, large river systems)</p>	<p>Many data sources (ACCSP, StreamNet, state resource agency databases)</p>	<p>MICRA, GLFC, ASMFC, etc. (N = dozens?)</p> <p>Regional Partnerships</p>
<p>Habitat conditions largely result from local scale resource issues (artificial barriers, poor land use practices)</p>	<p>Assessment of habitats and populations.</p> <p>Need to know: What info is needed to answer relevant questions?)</p>	<p>Local resources managers, watershed groups, TU chapters, etc. (N = 100's - 1,000's)</p> <p>On-the-ground habitat projects</p>

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Ecological Framework

- Fish are the focal group – aquatic communities benefit
- Geographic focus
- Locally driven, yet supports landscape-level principles and activities
- Scientifically-based
- Adaptive over different spatial and temporal scales
- Includes benchmarks, evaluation, and stimulation of joint ventures to fill needed gaps

Goal: Foster geographically focused, cooperative efforts that protect, restore, and enhance aquatic habitats and reverse declines in fish and aquatic species



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Administrative Framework

- Unite all stakeholders in a shared vision for habitat conservation and ensure links to other strategic fisheries efforts.
- Enhance understanding and coordination of existing authorities, rather than require new legislation
- Oversight committee for guidance
- Acknowledge need for new \$ for long-term success, however work should commence now



Goal: Utilize and develop information systems to track progress and identify needs to meet ecological objectives.

Examples of Potential Actions



Dam removal and riparian restoration, Mattaneway Creek, Pennsylvania.



Riparian habitat improvement, Maine



Before



After

Livestock fencing and reseeding, Clinch River, Virginia.

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Benefits

- Stronger coordination of efforts; ideas can be shared; gaps can be filled
- Increased understanding and support among constituents (Congress, NGO's, general public, etc.)
- Eventually, more funding for projects at the local level that meet national priorities

Better conservation = more opportunities to enjoy fish and their habitats!



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We Want You!

- Shared interjurisdictional responsibilities.
- Enhance and expand constituent connections.
- Additional technical expertise and available databases.
- Additional authorities of responsibility.
- Leverage funding opportunities.



Potential Regional Partnerships



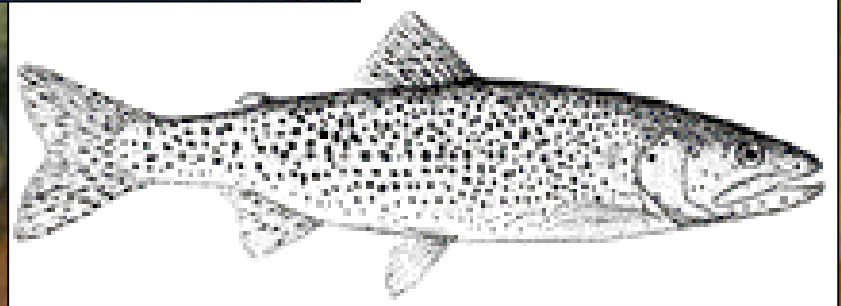
Brook trout



Apache trout

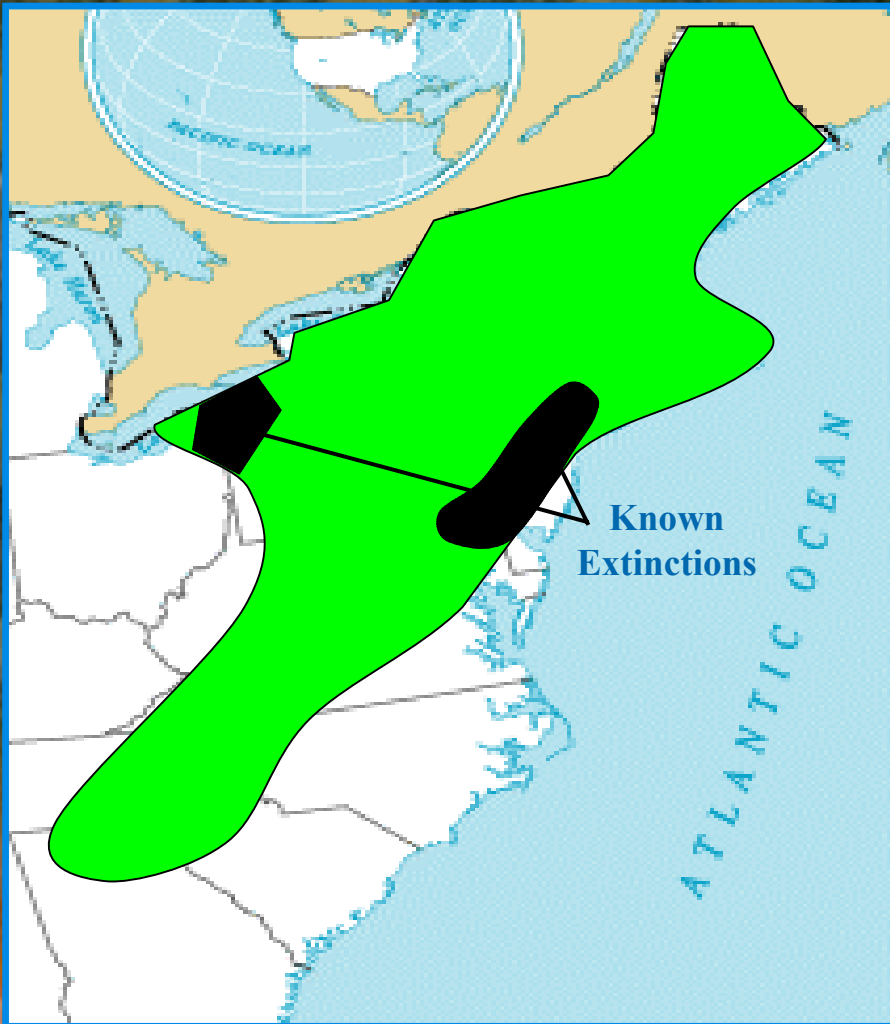


Bonneville Cutthroat



Western trout

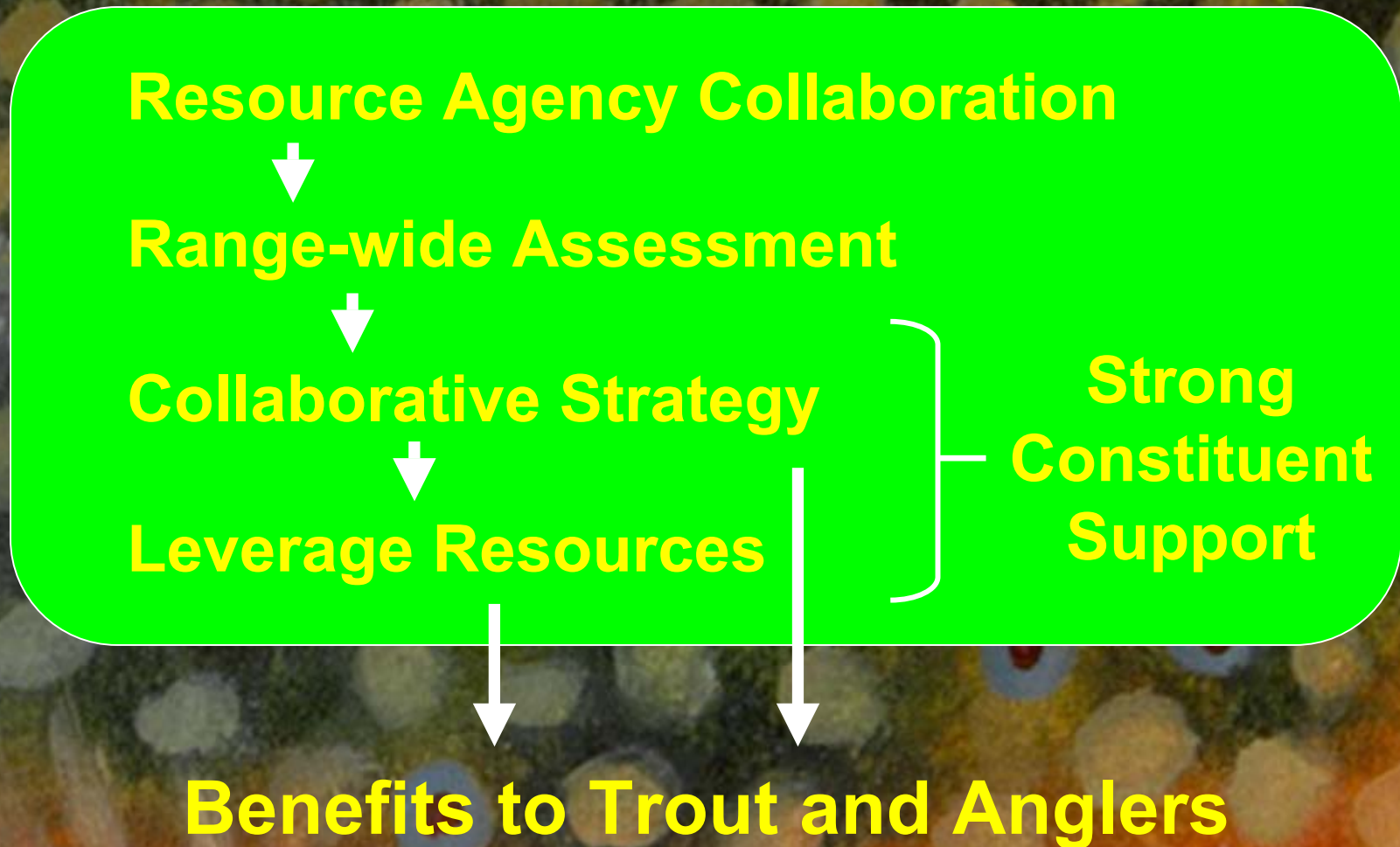
Native Brook Trout: A Potential Model for the NFHI



Why Does FWS-Fisheries Care?

- Prevent listing
- Fisheries Program strategic plan directs us to:
 - Protect, restore, and enhance habitat
 - Restore fish
 - Improve public use
- National Fish Habitat Initiative
 - Geographically focused partnerships
 - Range-wide assessment
- **Eastern Brook Trout Conservation Initiative:**
Partners ask us for leadership and assistance

Applying the Joint Venture Model



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Please visit www.fishhabitat.org
for more information.